

May the Members of the House of Representatives be united in enacting laws and formulating policies that assure everyone equal justice under the law. This we ask and for this we are eternally grateful and praise You Lord now and forever. Amen.

#### THE JOURNAL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair has examined the Journal of the last day's proceedings and announces to the House his approval thereof.

Pursuant to clause 1, rule I, the Journal stands approved.

#### PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Will the gentleman from South Carolina (Mr. BROWN) come forward and lead the House in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. BROWN of South Carolina led the Pledge of Allegiance as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

#### HOMETOWN HERO

(Mr. BROWN of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BROWN of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, over the years the first district of South Carolina has been home to many heroes. I would like to thank one of them today.

Brigadier General Jerry Black retired this Sunday after 36 years of distinguished service in the U.S. Air Force and Air Force Reserve.

A low country native, General Black graduated from St. Andrews High School and the Citadel. From there the Air Force sent him all over the world.

From pilot training in Texas to service in Vietnam, from Panama to the Middle East, in peacetime and in war, General Black was always eager to answer his country's call to duty.

Most recently, General Black served as the wing commander for the 315th Air Wing in Charleston Air Force Base. It was here that I had the pleasure to meet with him on several occasions. I can personally attest to the many long hours he dedicated to ensure success in both Afghanistan and Iraq.

General Black leaves behind a legacy of dedication, selflessness, and integrity. Our country is better for his service, and the first district is proud of this hometown hero.

#### CELEBRATING THE 19TH ANNIVERSARY OF NEW COVENANT ASSEMBLY CHRISTIAN MINISTRY

(Mr. WILSON of South Carolina asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. WILSON of South Carolina. Mr. Speaker, this past weekend marked the

19th Founder's Week and Church Anniversary Services for the New Covenant Assembly Christian Ministry of Columbia, South Carolina.

Led by Pastor C.L. Hardy and his first lady, Cynthia Hardy, this ministry has risen from humble beginnings in 1984 at St. Andrews Community Center to an inspiring edifice changing lives across the midlands of South Carolina.

Additionally, Dr. Hardy founded the NCA Community Development Center. Its mission is to aid, service, and develop people to reach their highest and fullest potential by providing special outreach programs, promoting educational success, and by enhancing permanent leadership.

Dr. Hardy's success has been recognized by his appointment as Suffrogon Bishop in region three of the Pentecostal Assemblies of the World and his election as chairman of the Carolina State Council. However, as Dr. Hardy often says, "It's all about the Lord, not me."

I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Dr. and Mrs. Hardy for their many achievements and wish them well for many more years of dedicated service to the people of both Carolinas.

#### SUPPORTING THE AMERICORPS PROGRAM

(Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of AmeriCorps, a program that offers an opportunity for young people and Americans of all ages to contribute to their communities. It makes the dream of college education a reality for families who work hard and play by the rules while meeting compelling human needs in our communities in a cost-effective manner.

I have been supportive of all national and community service initiatives President Bush appealed for in his 2002 State of the Union address. But the majority side of the appropriators refused to include AmeriCorps funding in the supplemental appropriations bill.

Mr. Speaker, the lack of supplementary funding for AmeriCorps has had a vital impact on Dallas, my hometown, and the other AmeriCorps programs across the State.

Throughout the past year, nearly 72 AmeriCorps volunteers have tutored 691 youths in the State of Texas including the Dallas Habitat for Humanities and the YMCA of Dallas Oak Cliff Branch.

In Texas, as in other States, AmeriCorps volunteers provide a host of services including building affordable housing, teaching computer skills to youth and seniors, and managing after-school programs aimed at youngsters who might otherwise drop out of school.

Mr. Speaker, we will not find common ground or reach higher ground if we turn national service into a partisan playground.

I will continue to work hard and do everything I can to strengthen this program, and I ask my House colleagues to do everything as well.

#### DEMOCRACY MEANS YOU

(Mr. PITTS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, my office, just like any other office here on the Hill, responds to thousands of constituent concerns each month. We spend a great deal of time responding in a timely manner to these letters, e-mails, and phone call requests; and this give and take is the hallmark of our democracy.

Lately, I have been receiving more and more letters and e-mails sent by organizations supposedly on behalf of my constituents. One of these organizations recently sent a letter to my office from one of my constituents. The problem is that this constituent is a personal friend of mine who did not ask them to send a letter to me with his name on it. In fact, he did not even agree with the content of the letter. He simply signed up to receive e-mail updates. He told me in an e-mail last month that "every week this group would send junk to the people on their list, and then ask you to forward it to your politicians. What a scam. I never forwarded any of that garbage." Yet one of those messages got to me with his name on it.

It is outrageous that any group would send mass mailings to Members of Congress under false pretenses, deceptively putting someone's name on it without their knowledge or consent. We rely on the integrity of the mail so that we can reply in good faith; and when that good faith is undermined, it is shameful and a disgrace to the American democratic system.

#### TRANSPORTATION, TREASURY, AND INDEPENDENT AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2004

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BURGESS). Pursuant to House Resolution 351 and rule XVIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union for the further consideration of the bill, H.R. 2989.

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IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union for the further consideration of the bill (H.R. 2989) making appropriations for the Departments of Transportation and Treasury, and independent agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2004, and for other purposes, with Mr. DREIER in the Chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The CHAIRMAN. When the Committee of the Whole rose on Thursday,